

Good morning.

My name is Cynthia Osborne, and I am a professor of early education and policy at Vanderbilt University, and the Executive Director of the Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center there. I'm submitting this written testimony on why investing in the first three years of a child's life is important, as it relates to SB 487, An act establishing the Infant and Toddler Early Care and Family Support Initiative.

The science of the developing child is clear that the first three years of life are the most rapid and sensitive period of development. The brain is forming more than a million neural connections per second, and more than 90% of the brain is formed during this time. So, if you want to support children's healthy development, investing in the time period in which they are developing the most is an effective choice.

Access to high quality, affordable child care is one of the most effective strategies that states can make to foster healthy development and ensure children thrive from the start. High quality includes four crucial elements:

1. An emphasis on building nurturing relationships between the caregivers and children - because nurturing relationships stimulate optimal brain development
2. Basing the curriculum on the science of learning through play
3. Engaging families in the program and connecting families with resources within the community
4. And caring for the teachers or caregivers so that they can care for the children - this includes offering them an adequate salary and work conditions.

But, access to high quality, affordable child care isn't only an important strategy to promote children's development. It is also an essential component of a strong economy. The research is clear that investments in child care subsidies lead to substantial increases in maternal employment and household income. These outcomes are great for the workers, the employers, and the economy as a whole. For detailed information about how Connecticut's current subsidy model meets the needs of families and providers alike and how the state compares to neighboring states, please refer to the attachment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information,
Dr. Cynthia Osborne

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